

Workplace Equality: Contemporary Social Justice in the Workplace



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Workplace equality issues affect everyone in the community. Contemporary social justice explains inequalities among women, prisoners and people of oppressed minorities. Diversity resistance continues to pervade the hierarchical monoculture within the workplace. Policies and behaviors that limit people of color, or are discriminatory based on age, disability, national origin, pregnancy, religion, or gender are workplace issues with the apparent contradiction of "what we say", and "what we do at work".

We must communicate our insight about how inequality has created a power structure that is weakened by the smallest criticism. Resistance to change is a spontaneous behavior mechanism in response to fear. Overall, we as a working community need to avoid tactics that support lip-service to diversity initiatives without structured action. Consider diversity resistance as a barrier to equal pay or employment opportunities. How do we subject a person without an opportunity for employment to the same standards as someone consistently employed and earning a salary? Are homelessness, lack of housing options and socio-economic victimization considered a disability? The very definition of resister is someone unaware of their responsibility to include everyone and their differences. Diverting the issue of inequality with statistics as a means to continue with discriminatory regulations are common hiring strategies. If the mere word multicultural, or diversity causes reactions of aversion, eye rolling, and indignation where can you build a foundation for the oppressed? Addressing diversity that exists requires insight into the fear of loss, and perceptions of power within the working community. Equality mandates fostering a greater sense of connection and shared opportunity.

Inclusion must be organic, not forced. Retaliation for discrimination claims further inhibits equality in the workplace. Many cases go unreported because of continued dilemmas of oppression. If I confront a coworker on their inability to effectively include me in a project, it will further isolate me and negatively affect the status of my job. This example explains why diversity initiatives fail. This would not continue, if there were equality within the workplace. Claims of discrimination are costly and foster a hostile work environment. It should not be an expectation that the oppressed find their own enlightened acceptance of inequality.

Contributing to a diverse workforce means the reality of being present, but excluded. Diversity strategies that promote action support integration among employees, as well as within services to clients. The Equal Employment Opportunity Office provides technical support to workplace questions regarding diversity and equality. This office also provides technical support to businesses regarding diversity initiatives and training. Equality in the workplace requires combating resistance to changing workplace dynamics. However, no one should feel they need to tip toe around issues of equal pay, employing prisoners for trade labor, or legal rights of addicted workers. Communication of your work experience is a valuable tool for overcoming resistance.

Published by [Amie Comeau](#)

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www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/index.cfm

www.hrc.org/issues/equalityforward.asp

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